

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 NEAE-00 INRE-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00

USIE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01

PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 IO-13 SAM-01 A-01 OPR-02 SY-05

OC-06 CCO-00 FEAE-00 OES-06 SCS-03 SCA-01 SCCT-01

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FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

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INFO SIT-REP COLLECTIVE PRIORITY 73

USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN GER

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CINCUSAREUR HEIDELBERG GER

USDOCOSOUTH NAPLES IT

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 BEIRUT 7105

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MILI, PINS, PINT, LE

SUBJECT: LEBANESE SITUATION AUGUST 26

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REF: BEIRUT 7082

1. SUMMARY: LITTLE INDISCRIMINATE ARTILLERY SHELLING IN EAST AND WEST BEIRUT. CONTRADICTIONARY REPORTS ON BEIRUT CONFRONTATION LINE FIGHTING. TRIPOLI TENSE, BUT LITTLE GROUND MOVEMENT. SPECULATION ON CHRISTIAN/SYRIAN OFFENSIVE INTENTIONS IN JEZZINE AREA IN SOUTH. SOME LIMITED GROUND ACTION IN METN. ESTIMATED MAXIMUM 1200 IRAQIS NOW IN LEBANON. RIGHT ACCEPTS ARAB LEAGUE SUMMIT, WITH CONDITIONS. SOME HOPE FOR LATEST ARAB LEAGUE-SPONSORED PEACE PLAN. JUNBLATT HAS NEW MODERATE TONE, BUT QULAYLAT CONTINUES HARD LINE. SYRIAN BORDER RULES CONTINUE TO CHANGE. ELECTRICITY SERVICE IN BEIRUT IMPROVING. PRESS NOTES U.S. DENIAL OF PLANS TO ESTABLISH CONSULATE IN JOUNIEH. END SUMMARY.

2. GROUND SITUATION. BEIRUT AREA. WITH SOME EXCEPTIONS, INDISCRIMINATE ARTILLERY SHELLING BETWEEN EAST AND WEST BEIRUT HAS CEASED. CONTRADICTIONARY REPORTS ON LEVEL OF CONFRONTATION LINE FIGHTING. RIGHTISTS SPEAK OF "PARTIAL FREEZE" ON MILITARY ACTIVITIES IN CAPITAL, BUT OTHER REPORTS INDICATE CONTINUED INTENSE ATTACKS BY FIRE, ESPECIALLY IN KHANDAQ AL GHAMIQ-BISHARA AL KHOURY AREA. AMINE GEMAYEL SAYS NABAA INHABITANTS WHO LEFT DURING RECENT CHRISTIAN CONQUEST HAVE BEGUN TO RETURN, AND IMAM MUSA SADR REPORTED AS CONTINUING EFFORTS TO PROMOTE RETURN OF SHIITES TO NABAA AND OTHER AREAS WHERE THEY USED TO LIVE. WE HAVE A REPORT OF BRAWLING IN AIN EL MREISSE BETWEEN FATAH AND PFLP ADHERENTS, AND OF PRESENCE OF SOME 25-50 IRAQIS IN AREA.

3. GROUND SITUATION ELSEWHERE. TRIPOLI AREA REMAINS TENSE, BUT NO SIGNIFICANT GROUND MOVEMENT. RIGHTISTS CLAIM THEY STRENGTHENING THEIR SIEGE POSITIONS. LEBANESE ARMY G-2 OFFICER SAYS HE CERTAIN NOT MORE THAN 50 IRAQI FIGHTERS IN TRIPOLI. IN THE BEKAA, AL-MUHARRIR REPORTS THREE EXPLOSIONS IN BAALBEK CAUSED BY "POPULAR" RESISTANCE TO SYRIAN OCCUPATION. IN SOUTH, AL-MUHARRIR SAYS DANY CHAMOUN AND BASHIR GEMAYEL HAVE VISITED JEZZINE, ALLEGEDLY TO PLAN OFFENSIVE OPERATIONS IN AREA. PAPER SAYS SYRIANS STILL REINFORCING IN AREA. AS-SAFIR LIKEWISE DETECTS SIGNS OF OFFENSIVE CHRISTIAN-SYRIAN INTENTIONS. IN HIGH METN, CONFIDENTIAL

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SOME SIGNS OF GROUND ACTION, AS SOME 150 CHRISTIAN TROOPS, WITH ARMORED SUPPORT, REPORTED TO HAVE ATTEMPTED UNSUCCESSFUL ASSAULT ON SANNINE. FOLLOWING LATEST ARRIVAL OF IRAQI VOLUNTEERS, LEBANESE ARMY G-2 ESTIMATES TOTAL NOW SOME 1200 IRAQI FIGHTERS IN ALL OF LEBANON, MOSTLY IN TYRE AND SIDON (SEPTTEL). (WE BELIEVE THIS ESTIMATE HIGH.)

4. ARAB LEAGUE SUMMIT. AL DEPUTY KHOLI AND MILITARY

COMMANDER GHONEIM QUOTED EARLY AUG 26 AS SAYING THAT PEACE PLAN CURRENTLY BEING NEGOTIATED IN BEIRUT (PARA 5 BELOW) WILL BE ON SUMMIT AGENDA. CHAMOUN SENT MESSAGE TO AL SECRETARIAT INDICATING PRESIDENT FRANGIE APPROVES OF SUMMIT IDEA, WITH FOLLOWING FOUR CONDITIONS: (1) IMMEDIATE APPLICATION OF CAIRO ACCORDS ON PALESTINIAN STATUS; (2) APPEAL TO NUMBER OF FRIENDLY AND SISTER STATES TO PARTICIPATE IN REESTABLISHMENT OF ORDER AND RECONSTRUCTION IN LEBANON; (3) POLITICAL TRUCE TO PERMIT ESTABLISHMENT OF NEW BASIS OF LEBANESE POLITICAL LIFE BY NEW (SARKIS) REGIME; AND (4) A CEASEFIRE. MESSAGE ALSO STATED FRANGIE'S DESIRE THAT MEETING TAKE PLACE IN CAPITAL OF A COUNTRY WHICH HAS NOT TAKEN PART IN WAR "AGAINST LEBANESE," SUCH AS AMMAN, DAMASCUS, OR RIYADH. KARAME ON PREVIOUS DAY SENT SEPARATE MESSAGE TO LEAGUE ACCEPTING SUMMIT MEETING IDEA.

5. ARAB LEAGUE-SPONSORED PEACE PLAN. NEW PEACE PLAN CURRENTLY BEING NEGOTIATED BASICALLY BETWEEN PHALANGE AND PALESTINIANS UNDER ARAB LEAGUE AUSPICES. L'ORIENT AUG 26 SPEAKS OF PLAN TO BE IMPLEMENTED OVER THREE-MONTH PERIOD; FROM OTHER SOURCES, WE HEAR PLAN SUPPOSED TO BE IMPLEMENTED AS UNIT. PALESTINIANS SUPPOSED TO WITHDRAW FROM HIGH METN AREA, AND POSSIBLY CHRISTIANS AND SYRIANS ALSO TO UNDERTAKE PARTIAL WITHDRAWALS IN AREA, AND NEUTRAL ZONE ESTABLISHED WITH ARAB LEAGUE FORCES. 2300 AL FORCES NOW IN LEBANON SEEM INADEQUATE FOR THIS TASK. EXPECTED MEETING ON AUG 27 (SITREP AUG 25) NOW SAID TO BE ONLY OF RIGHTIST LEADERS AND ARAB LEAGUE REPRESENTATIVES. NO WORD YET ON SYRIAN ATTITUDE, PARTICULARLY ON POSSIBLE PROVISION IN PLAN FOR CHRISTIAN/SYRIAN WITHDRAWAL FROM JEZZINE AREA. WE ARE TOLD THAT JUNBLATT HAS AGREED TO PLAN; HOWEVER, IBRAHIM QULAYLAT IS TAKING COMPLETELY HOSTILE ATTITUDE. CONFIDENTIAL

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PLO IS MAKING NO PUBLIC COMMENTARY, BUT WE UNDERSTAND THAT IT IS FAVORABLY DISPOSED. AL DEPUTY KHOLI HAS RESUMED HIS ROUNDS IN BEIRUT, MEETING SEPARATELY WITH GROUP OF PLO LEADERS AND WITH ARAFAT, AS WELL AS WITH JUNBLATT AND AL FORCE COMMANDERS. HE EXPECTED MEET AUG 26 WITH PRESIDENT FRANGIE AND WITH PRESIDENT-ELECT SARKIS. HE SAID NO PARTY TO CONFLICT YET HAS REJECTED PEACE PLAN, ALTHOUGH SOME WISH TO AMEND IT, AND SAID "THIS TIME WE HAVE SOME NEW IDEAS."

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INFO SIT-REP COLLECTIVE PRIORITY 74

USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN GER

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 BEIRUT 7105

6. PALESTINIANS AND LEFTISTS. ARAFAT CHAIRED MEETINGS
OF LEADERSHIP OF FATAH NIGHT OF AUG 24-25 AND OF PLO AUG 25.
JUNBLATT CONTINUES MORE MODERATE TONE, CLAIMING THAT SYRIA
IS BEGINNING TO RETREAT IN FACE OF ARAB WORLD PRESSURES.

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HE QUOTED AS TELLING KHOLI THAT HE BELIEVES THAT "THE AMERICANS WILL BACK DOWN FROM THE CONSPIRACY IF THEY FIND THAT EVENTS IN LEBANON WILL BLOW UP THE SITUATION IN THE MIDDLE EAST." HOWEVER, QULAYLAT SAID THAT LEFTIST FRONT DECISION TO PURSUE STRUGGLE WAS NOT MADE SUDDENLY BUT IN LIGHT OF CAREFUL REFLECTION ON THE REALITIES. HE SAID PRESIDENT-ELECT SARKIS OUGHT TO MOVE TO AREA CONTROLLED BY NATIONAL MOVEMENT FOR PROTECTION. SHIITE LEADER AHMED SAFOUAN, WHO DEFECTED TO CHRISTIAN SIDE DURING NABAA BATTLE, HAS BEEN EXECUTED IN SOFAR, BY THE "UNION OF MARTYRS OF NABAA," ACCORDING TO WAFI.

7. ON THE RIGHT. HASSAN KHALED, GRAND MUFTI OF THE REPUBLIC, ON OCCASION OF BEGINNING OF RAMADAN, ISSUED MESSAGE CALLING FOR ARAB KINGS AND CHIEFS OF STATE TO SOLVE LEBANON'S PROBLEMS, ENDORSING RETURN TO CAIRO ACCORDS ON PALESTINIAN STATUS, AND STATING THAT PRINCIPAL TASK OF MEDIATORS SHOULD BE TO EFFECT SYRIAN-PALESTINIAN RECONCILIATION.

8. SYRIAN BORDER. RADIO AMCHITE SAID EARLY AUG 26 THAT FOURTH OFFICE HAS BEEN OPENED FOR ISSUANCE OF LEBANESE EXIT PERMITS, IN JEZZINE. PERMITS SUPPOSED TO BE ISSUED 72 HOURS AFTER APPLICATION, AND VALID FOR MAXIMUM OF 48 HOURS, AFTER WHICH LEBANESE VISITING SYRIA MUST OBTAIN SYRIAN GOVT PERMISSION. U.S. EMBASSY DRIVER AUG 26 ENCOUNTERED NUMEROUS DELAYS AT NUMEROUS CHECKPOINTS BETWEEN DAMASCUS AND WEST BEIRUT, BUT FOUND THAT HIS CLAIM THAT HE CARRYING POUCHES FOR EMBASSY GENERALLY RESPECTED.

9. ECONOMIC NOTES. AL-MUHARRIR SAYS CHASE MANHATTAN BANK HAS BOUGHT SEVERAL MAJOR HOTELS IN WEST BEIRUT, AT VERY LOW PRICES. LEBANON ELECTRICITY OFFICE HAS PUBLISHED SCHEDULE INDICATING THAT VARIOUS SECTORS OF BEIRUT WILL HAVE EIGHT HOURS OF ELECTRICITY EVERY 32 HOURS BEGINNING AUG 26. SIDON REFINERY REPORTEDLY WILL BEGIN AGAIN TO PRODUCE SMALL QUANTITIES OF GASOLINE. MAZOUT HOWEVER REMAINS IN VERY SHORT SUPPLY--ABOUT 15 DAYS' SUPPLY AVAILABLE FOR BAKERIES AND OTHER VITAL INSTITUTIONS.

10. HOUGHTON-MACK MISSION. NO FURTHER REPORTS OR CONFIDENTIAL

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COMMENTS IN PRESS AUG 26 ON U.S. DIPLOMATIC MISSION TO CHRISTIAN LEADERS. BEIRUT PRESS REPORTS U.S. DENIAL THAT CONSULATE IN JOUNIEH IS PLANNED, REAFFIRMATION OF SUPPORT FOR LEBANESE UNITY, AND OPPOSITION TO PARTITION. HUNT

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